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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05
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/170 W
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P R 190733Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8404
INFO USUN, NEW YORK 1854
USMTN, GENEVA 2765

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 1926/1

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCON, ESCAP, TH
SUBJ: ESCAP COMMITTEE ON TRADE, 21ST SESSION, BANGKOK, 10-16
JANUARY 1978

SUMMARY. ESCAP TRADE COMMITTEE SESSION WAS HIGHLY POLARIZED ALONG
NORTH-SOUTH LINES BUT POINTED LDC CRITICISMS WERE DELIVERED IN
GENERALLY LOW KEY. COMPLAINTS OF PROTECTIONISM WERE FREQUENTLY
RECURRING THEME, ALONG WITH ALLEGED NON-FULFILLMENT BY DC'S OF
PROMISES MADE IN TOKYO DECLARATIONAND UNCTAD IV. LTC'S DEPLORED
MEAGER RESULTS OF MTN TO DATE AND REPEATED CHARGE THAT DC RE-
QUESTS FOR CONCESSIONS ARE CONTRARY TO TOKYO DECLARATION. COM-
MITTEE DISCUSSED DRAFT BLUEPRINT FOR TRADE EXPANSION AND COOPER-
ATION IN THE ESCAP REGION PREPARED BY ESCAP SECRETARIAT. DOCU-
MENT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE GENERALLY USEFUL BUT A NUMBER OF
DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING U.S., SAID THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT CER-
TAIN SPECIFIC COMPONENTS, SUCH AS PROPOSALS FOR REGIONAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS FOR ESCAP REGION THAT WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO
CONCLUSION OF MTN. WITH REGARD TO INDIVIDUAL DELEGATIONS,
SRV ATTENDED FOR SECOND TIME AND KEPT LOW PROFILE AFTER DE-
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LIVERING RHETORICAL BLAST IN ITS INITIAL STATEMENT. USSR
WENT ALONG WITH A MINIMUM OF DISRUPTIVENESS. JAPAN AND ALSO
AUSTRALIA PARTICIPATED WITH IMPRESSIVE TECHNICAL PREPARATION.
EUROPEAN MEMBERS, INCLUDING EC REPRESENTATIVE PLAYED RELATIVE-
LY LESS CONSPICUOUS ROLES. INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH
AS WELL AS MALAYSIA, HONG KONG, SINGAPORE AND IRAN AT TIMES,
SPOKE MOST INSISTENTLY FOR LDC'S. UNCTAD REPRESENTATIVE

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(MALAQUE, PHILIPPINES) WAS MODERATE AND FAIRLY NON-CONFRON-
TATIONAL. END SUMMARY.

1. PARTICIPANTS IN MEETING INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF 24
MEMBER COUNTRIES AND OBSERVERS FROM THREE NON-MEMBERS. ALSO
PRESENT WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF 11 ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS EC,
UN BODIES, AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. FIRST DAY WAS DEVOTED TO
OPENING ADDRESSES, ELECTION OFFICERS, AND PRESENTATION BY
RESPECTIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF COUNTRY STATEMENTS ON TRADE AND
TRADE POLICIES. OPENING ADDRESSES WERE DELIVERED BY THAI DE-
PUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE PROK AMRANAND AND ESCAP EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY J.B.P. MARAMIS. AMRANAND VOICED CONCERN OVER PRO-
TECTIVE MEASURES ADOPTED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, BUT ALSO EX-
PRESSED GRATIFICATION WITH ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE MEASURES
ADOPTED BY SOME COUNTRIES. CHARACTERIZING THE RESULTS OF THE
NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AS DISAPPOINTING AND CALLING FOR AN EARLY
START IN PREPARATIONS FOR UNCTAD V, HE STATED THAT ESCAP
TOGETHER WITH ITS SUBSIDIARY ORGANS LENDS ITSELF WELL TO SUCH,
PREPARATIONS. MARAMIS ALSO REFERRED TO DISTURBING SPREAD OF
PROTECTIONIST MEASURES IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, STATING THAT
FAILURES AND DELAYS IN REACHING AGREEMENT AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL
ON MEASURES TO BENEFIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES POINTS TO NEED FOR
ACTION AT REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL LEVELS. COMMITTEE OFFICERS
WERE ELECTED FROM THAILAND (CHARIMAN), BANGLADESH (VICE
CHAIRMAN), IRAN (VICE CHARIMAN), INDIA (RAPPORTEUR) AND
AUSTRALIA (CHAIRMAN OF DRAFTING AND TECHINCAL COMMITTEE).
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2. COUNTRY STATEMENTS REVIEWING DEVELOPMENTS IN TRADE AND TRADE
POLICIES TENDED TO EMPHASIZE DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES COM-
POUNDED BY WEAK RECOVERY FROM GLOBAL RECESSION AND PROTECTIONIST
TRENDS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. LDC REPRESENTATIVES CRITICIZED
ALLEGED FAILURE OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OT LIVE UP TO PROMISES
MADE IN UNCTAD IV AND TOKYO DECLARATION, CITING FOOTDRAGGING ON
IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE FRAMEWORK AND SLOWNESS OF MTN.
PARTICULAR DISSATISFACTION WAS EXPRESSED WITH LACK OF PROGRESS
IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS GROUP.

3. ASIDE FROM SRV STATEMENT, WHICH WAS PREDICTABLY BITING BUT
DID NOT SINGLE OUT UNITED STATES FOR ABUSE, MOST STRIDENT CRITI-
CISM OF DCS WAS PROBABLY BY IRAN, WHICH SAID LDCS STILL WAITING
AFTER YEARS OF PROMISES. HONG KONG, PAKISTAN, SINGAPORE AND
MALAYSIA WERE ALSO NOTABLE FOR THE FORCE OF THEIR CRITICISM OF
DC POLICIS.

4. AMONG THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, JAPAN SAID WE MUST REMEMBER
THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND NOT INDULGE IN SHORT-SIGHTED POLI-
CIES, NOTING THAT IT IS ALREADY TAKING LIBERALIZING STEPS ON
OVER 100 ITEMS BEFORE CONCLUSION OF MTN. LOW-KEY STATEMENT BY

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USSR MENTIONED MOVEMENT FORM CONFRONTATION TO DETENTE. NOTING READINESS OF SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT OF USSR TO COOPERATE WITH OTHERS, USSR REPRESENTATIVE SAID PLANNED ECONOMIES ARE FREE FROM MANY OF PROBLEMS OF CAPITALIST COUNTRIES. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE SUPPLEMENTED COUNTRY PRESENTATION WITH STATEMENT WHICH SOUGHT TO GIVE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE ON EFFORTS BY U.S. AND OTHER DCS TO HOLD LINE AGAINST NEW RESTRICTIONS AND TO CONTINUE COMMITMENT TO GOAL OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION. EC REPRESENTATIVE SAID ECONOMIC PROSPECTS NOT PROMISING, BUT NOTED EC "HAD CONFOUNDED CRITICS BY SIGNING A CONTINUATION OF MFA." UK SAID GENERAL IMPORT CONTROLS HAVE NO PART IN OVERALL UK TRADE POLICY BUT SELECTIVE IMPORT CONTROLS MAY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY. FRANCE, NOTING WEAK FRENCH ECONOMY AND LOW GROWTH RATE, DECLARED IT HAD NEVERTHELESS RESISTED PROTECTIONISM.
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5. SECRETARIAT INTRODUCED REVIEW OF MTN BY NOTING THAT US-EC AGREEMENT ON FOUR-PHASE PROGRAM HAD BROUGHT FRESH MOMENTUM. GATT REPRESENTATIVE WHO GAVE COMMENTS UPDATING SECRETARIAT STAFF PAPER, SAID DEEP CONCERN OVER PROTECTIONIST TREND WAS EXPRESSED AT NOVEMBER SESSION OF CONTRACTING PARTIES BUT COMMITMENT TO OPEN INTERNATIONAL TRADING SYSTEM MAINTAINED. UNCTAD REPRESENTATIVE SAID UNRESPONSIVENESS AND FIRM STANCE OF DCS HAVE GIVEN RISE TO DOUBTS ON PART OF LDCS, WHO ARE HOPING TOKYO ROUND WILL NOT BE REPEAT OF KENNEDY ROUND. LDCS IN GENERAL SAID MTN IMPORTANT TO THEM, EXPRESSED DISMAY AT SLOW PACE AND DC REQUESTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH THEY CLAIMED WERE CONTRARY TO NON-RECIPROCITY PROVISION OF TOKYO DECLARATION. U.S. INSISTENCE ON CONTRIBUTIONS IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICIZED. LDCS CHARACTERIZED TROPICAL PRODUCTS OFFERS AS EXTREMELY INADEQUATE AND COMPLAINED THAT SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT HAS YET TO BE WORKED OUT.

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6. AMONG DCS, AUSTRALIA NOTED IT LOOKS FORWARD TO COMPLETION OF MTN IN 1978 AND SAID CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER OFFERS IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS MUST BE TAKEN UP IN FULL NEGOTIATIONS. FRANCE COMMENTED THAT COMPROMISE RESULT OF MTN WILL LEAVE SOME DISAPPOINTMENT BUT THIS IS INEVITABLE IN A NEGOTIATION. EC SIAD ITS TROPICAL PRODUCTS OFFER IS CONSIDERABLE AND EC HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO GO BEYOND 1981 ON GSP. USSR DECLARED THAT THERE SHOULD BE PROVISION FOR QUOTE TRULY JUST NEGOTIATIONS UNQUOTE AND THAT PRESENT STATE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE REQUIRES ACTIVATION OF UNCTAD. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE NOTED THAT IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS WHERE U.S. IS ASKING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LDC'S WE ARE OFFERING BOUND MFN CONCESSIONS RATHER THAN THE UNBOUND GSP THAT IS OFFERED BY OTHER DCS. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ALSO CLARIFIED SEVERAL POINTS IN SECRETARIAT'S PAPER FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM.

7. IN DISCUSSION OF FOLLOW-UP TO UNCTAD IV, UNCTAD REPRESENTA-
SUSPENDED NEGOTATIONS ON COMMON FUND. LDC PRESENTATIVES UNIFORMLY BLAMED DCS FOR DEADLOCK IN TALKS AND CALLED FOR EXERCISE OF POLITICAL WILL BY DCS. FILIPINO SPEAKING FOR
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ASEAN EXPRESSED APPRECIATTION FOR SUPPORT OF NETHERLANDS ON COMMON FUND. DESCRIBING CF AS ESSENTIAL, HE SAID ASEAN SUPPORTS EQUITABLE AND REMUNERATIVE COMMODITY PRICES AND REQUESTED THAT ESCAP SECRETARIAT DIRECT MORE EFFORTS TO REGIONAL COMMODITY ACTIVITIES. USSR STRESSED MAIN FUNCTION OF CF SHOULD BE FINANCING OF COMMON STOCKS AND DESCRIBED ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP OF LDCS TO CAPITALIST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS STILL MARKED BY COLONIALISM OR NEO-COLONIALISM
UK NOTED THAT GROUP B COUNTRIES AHD AGREED TO PRINCIPLE OF A FUND AND EXPRESSED REGRET AT DICISION OF GROUP 77 TO SUSPEND NEGOTIATIONS. REPRESENTATIVES OF LDCS CALLED UPON DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO TAKE POSITIVE POSITION ON LDC DEBT PROBLEMS AT MARCH 1978 UNCTAD MINISTERIAL LEVEL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING SCHEDULED TO DEAL WITH THIS SUBJECT.

8. DISCUSSION OF PROGRESS REPORTS ON ESCAP ACTIVITIES

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INCLUDED FOLLOWING COMMENTS, LISTED AS SHOWN ON AGENDA:

A) REGIONAL TRADE AND MONETARY COOPERATION. BANGKOK AGREEMENT WAS GENERALLY SEEN AS FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT. JAPAN NOTED GATT WORKING PARTY WHILE REFERRING TO AGREEMENT AS A FORM OF SELF-HELP AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. AFGHANISTAN'S INTEREST IN JOINING WAS WELCOMED, AND IT WAS NOTED THAT BURMA AND NEPAL HAD ALSO SHOWN INTEREST. USSR SAID NO INFORMATION ON ASIAN CLEARING UNION HAD BEEN CIRCU-LATED AND IT WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE RELEVANT INFORMATION. SECRETARIAT STATED THAT ACU IS AUTONOMOUS BUT ANNUAL REPORT WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTED THAT U.S. IS SYMPATHETIC TO ACU ON ASSUMPTION ITS ACTIVITIES CON-TINUE TO BE CONSISTENT WITH IMF OBJECTIVES REGARDING OPEN, MULTILATERAL PAYMENTS SYSTEM. SECRETARIAT NOTED THAT ITS WORK ON ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ASIAN RESERVE BANK WAS HAMPERED BY LACK OF FUNDS.
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B) ESCAP TRADE PROMOTION CENTRE. WORK OF THE CENTER WAS COMMENDED BY NUMEROUS REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING U.S. AND USSR. LATTER OFFERED TO PROVIDE IT WITH QUOTE OTHER FORMS OF ASSIST-ANCE UNQUOTE.

C) ASSISTANCE TO LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES. NEPAL STRESSED NEED FOR SPECIAL CONCRETE ACTION TO HELP LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES, NOTED THAT PLEDGING FOR UN SPECIAL FUND FOR L-L QUOTE FAR FROM ENCOURAGING UNQUOTE.A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS INCLUDING U.S. RESPONDED WITH STATEMENTS SYMPATHETIC TO SITUATION OF L-L BUT NOT DEPARTING FROM POSITIONS TAKEN IN UN.

D) ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRIES. IT WAS NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE PROVIDED GENEROUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR A MOBILE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN DEVELOPING ISLAND COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC.

E) MULTINATIONAL EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE SCHEME. COMMENTS ON THIS PROPOSED SCHEME ENDORSED ITS USEFULNESS AND UNDP WAS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE NECESSARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ESCAP SECRETARIAT FOR COMPLETION OF PREPARATORY WORK.

F) ASIAN REINSURANCE CORPORATION. GENERAL CONSENSUS OF COM-MITTEE FAVORED ESTABLISHMENT OF ARC. BANGLADESH QUESTIONED WHY OTHER COUNTRIES ARE NOT JOINING AND PAKISTANT SIAD IT WAS CON-SIDERING BECOMING A FOUNDING MEMBER. PHILIPPINES SAID IT WOULD LIKE TO SEE SIGNING PERIOD EXTENDED TO MARCH 31. JAPAN STATED IT WAS GRATIFIED TO NOTE PROGRESS OF ARC AND WAS READY TO PROVIDE IT WITH EXPERTISE. AUSTRALIA SAID ARC WILL HELP IMPLEMENT DE-CISIONS TAKEN AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BUT FELT AGREEMENT

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SHOULD BE SCRUTINIZED BY LEGAL EXPERTS. UK REFRAINED FROM ANY
COMMENT ON ARC. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE REITERATED U.S. POSITION
THAT AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL REINSURANCE INSTITUTION WITH THE CAPA-
BILITY OF REQUIRING COMPULSORY CESSIONS WOULD CONSTITUTE OBSTACLE
TO FREE FLOW OF REINSURANCE OVER THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE
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AND SUGGESTED THAT COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE NOT JOINED THE CORPORA-
TION MAY FIND THIS A RELEVANT CONSIDERATION IN REACHING THEIR
INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS AS TO WHETHER TO BECOME MEMBERS. INDONESIA
STATED ITS REASON FOR NOT SIGNING WAS ITS RESERVATION RE COM-
PULSORY CESSION BUT THAT IT WAS NOW HAPPY TO RECONSIDER ITS
POSITION SINCE IT HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT IT COULD PARTICIPATE
ON A FREE CESSION BASIS.

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INFO USUN, NEW YORK 1856
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9. COMMITTEE GAVE EXTENSIVE CONSIDERATION TO"DRAFT BLUEPRINT
FOR TRADE EXPANSION AND COOPERATION IN THE ESCAP REGION" PRE-
PARED BY ESCAP SECRETARIAT. BLUEPRIN PORPOSES MEASURES THAT
MIGHT BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN EXISTING TRADE FRAMEWORK, SUCH AS
IMPROVEMENT IN INFORMATION FLOW TO IDENTIFY REGIONAL COMPLE-
MENTARITIES, PROMOTION OF JOINT VENTURES, ENCOURAGEMENT OF
LONG-TERM COMMODITY CONTRACTS, ETC. IN ADDITION, IT PROPOSES

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A REGIONAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR REDUCTION OF TRADE BARRIERS. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON USEFULNESS OF THE BLUEPRINT, WHICH JAPAN LABLED QUOTE THOUGHT-PROVOKING UNQUOTE. HOWEVER, MANY DELEGATIONS HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT VARIOUS COMPONENTS AND IRAN QUESTIONED ITS OVERALL USEFULNESS, STATING THAT UNLESS DCS ARE MORE FORTHCOMING BLUEPRINTS MEAN NOTHING. WHEN SRI LANKA QUESTIONED LACK OF PRIORITIES IN BLUEPRINT, SECRETARIAT REPLIED THAT PRIORITIES WOULD HAVE TO BE LAID DOWN BY MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AND SECRETARIAT WOULD NOT DO SO. REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL DCS, INCLUDING U.S., STATED THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT A MINI-MTN FOR THE REGION WHICH WOULD DUPLICATE PROGRAMS ALREADY UNDER WAY IN MTN. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT RE-SOURCES FOR ANY NEW PROPOSALS WILL COME FROM FUNDS THAT HAVE
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ALREADY BEEN APPROVED.

10. COMMITTEE AGREED THAT SECRETARIAT SHOULD CIRCULATE DRAFT BLUEPRINT TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AFTER INCORPORATION OF POINTS RAISED IN MEETING, WITH REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENTS FORWARD THEIR COMMENTS TO SECRETARIAT. BLUEPRINT WOULD BE PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING WHICH SECRETARIAT PROPOSES TO CONVENE AUGUST 21-26 IN NEW DELHI.

11. COMMITTEE ENDORSED MINOR CHANGES IN ITS WORK PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES FOR 1978-79 WHICH INVOLVED NO SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONS. COMMITTEE ALSO URGED SECRETARIAT TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO ENSURE MAXIMUM COORDINATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SO AS TO PREVENT DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS. WHEN USS RPORPOSED THAT ESCAP DO RE-SEARCH ON TRADE BETWEEN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND LDCS OF ESCAP REGION, SECRETARIAT SUGGESTED THAT IT COULD DO MORE ON THIS IF USSR WOULD PROVIDE BUDGET SUPPLEMENT.

12. DATE OF 22ND SESSION LEFT OPEN BUT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SAID TRADE COMMITTEE IS NOT LIKELY TO MEET AGAIN UNTIL AFTER UNCTAD V. PROPOSED AGENDA WOULD BE SAME AS THAT OF 21ST SESSION EXCEPT FOR ADDITION OF ITEM ON RAW MATERIALS AND COMMODITIES. COMMITTEE REPORT ADOPTED JANUARY 16.
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TAGS: OCON, ETRD, TH, ESCAP
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